

OBITUARY, AMA

A. Mason Ahearn (77), Former Chief of Medical Staff, GMH and WCH

Dr. Arthur Mason Ahearn died on July 25th, 2014 at the Medical University of South Carolina after a brief illness. He was 77 years old.

A Memorial Service will occur at Prince George Winyah Episcopal Church in Georgetown at 11:00AM on July 30th, 2014. Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be announced.

Dr. Ahearn was born on November 5th, 1936, in New York City, the son of Dr. Arthur J. Ahearn of New London, WI and Ella Highbie Mason Ahearn, of Fairport NY. He grew up in Westfield, New Jersey, and he graduated from The Pingry School, The University of Rochester, and Cornell University College of Medicine. After internship in surgery at The University of Chicago Hospitals, Dr. Ahearn joined the United States Army. He served as a Battalion Surgeon with the 82nd (ABN) Division, as I Corps Surgeon with the 5th Special Forces Group (ABN) in Vietnam, and as Deputy Surgeon, USAJFK Center for Special Warfare. Dr. Ahearn then completed an Orthopaedic Surgical Residency at Tripler Army Medical Center. He finished his initial active duty as Chief, Orthopedic Service, USA Dwight D. Eisenhower Medical Center, Fort Gordon, GA.

Dr. Ahearn practiced Orthopaedics for six years in Orangeburg, SC, before moving to Georgetown, SC in 1981. He has practiced there and in Murrells Inlet ever since, and he was the founding partner of Bay Orthopaedic Associates. Dr. Ahearn was an attending physician at Georgetown Memorial Hospital, where he served as Chief, Department of Surgery from 1990 to 1992 and as Chief, Medical Staff 1994 to 1995. He also attended at The Waccamaw Community Hospital, where he served as its first Chief, Medical Staff, from 2001 to 2003. He retired from active orthopaedic surgery in 2010, but he continued to see patients in the Nextstep Wound Center until July 2014.

In 1989, Dr. Ahearn joined the South Carolina Army National Guard. He commanded its 251st Evacuation Hospital during Operation Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia in 1991. Later he became Chief, Department of Surgery, 300th Combat Support Hospital, a joint hospital of the South Carolina and Tennessee Army National Guards. Colonel Ahearn retired as State Surgeon, South Carolina Army National Guard in 1996. Upon his retirement, he was awarded South Carolina's highest distinction, The Order of Palmetto, by Governor David M. Beasley. The US Army Medical Department awarded him The Order of Military Medical Merit.

Dr. Ahearn remained active in military medical circles. In 1994 he was invited into The Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces. In 2000, he chaired a national effort to improve the quality and quantity of medical students enrolling in military medical school programs. Dr.

Ahearn was the recipient of the Society's 2004 John R. Seal Award, and from 2007-2009, he served as SMCAF's 62nd President. His other decorations include The Legion of Merit, The Bronze Star for Heroism, two Bronze Stars for Meritorious Service, The Air Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, The Combat Medical Badge, The Master Parachute Badge, and Army Flight Surgeons Wings. In 2008, Dr. Ahearn was listed in Marquis' *Who's Who in America*.

In Georgetown, Dr. Ahearn attended Prince George Episcopal Church, where he served as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and as a member of the Pastoral Care Committee. He was a member of The Winyah Indigo Society, The Georgetown Cotillion Club, The Debordieu Club, and VFW Post 6444 , where he served as its Surgeon. The Ahearns were also members of The Summit Club in Columbia. He was a Life Member of the US Army Special Forces Association, Chapter XXXIV.

Dr. Ahearn was predeceased by his parents and his son Peter Cheek Ahearn. He is survived by his loving wife, Rita Claire Grubbs Ahearn of Georgetown, his sister, Sally Ahearn James of Sunnyvale, CA, by his children, John Mason Ahearn, Dr. Ella Ahearn Whelan, Susan Elizabeth Ahearn, Noel Ahearn Rinehart, Dr. Briggs Mason Ahearn, and by his five grand children.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests memoria to Prince George Episcopal Church, Box 674, Georgetown, SC 29442 or to The Wounded Warrior Foundation, 11905 Bowman Drive, Suite 510, Fredericksburg, VA 22408.